



NORTH CAROLINA ARMY RETIREE COUNCIL

Post Office Box 70029 Fort Bragg, North Carolina 28307-5000

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12 December 2005

MEMORANDUM FOR SEE DISTRIBUTION

SUBJECT: Minutes of the North Carolina Army Retiree Council Meeting
19 November 2005.

1. The quarterly meeting of the North Carolina Army Retiree Council (NCARC) was called to order by Co-Chairman SGM(R) Law at 1000 hours, 19 November 2005 at the Ft. Bragg Officers' Club.

MEMBERS PRESENT

SGM(R) Larry Law, Co-Chairman
COL(R) Rudy Baker
COL(R) David F. Borresen
COL(R) Joe F. Britt
COL(R) Donald A. Doll Jr. (II)
COL(R) Donald J. Goulet (V)
COL(R) Edward Mennona (VII)
COL(R) William F. Rawley Sr. (VI)
LTC(R) Thomas E. Parsons (VIII)
SGM(R) Frank M. Foronda (VII)
1SG(R) Robert H. Ward (II)
MSG(R) Moses L. Best
SFC(R) Richard A. Clemmons (IV)
SSG(R) Frances J. Crawford (V)
Mr. John Bell - IRSO
() indicates regional area

OTHERS PRESENT

COL Al Aycock, Garrison Commander
COL Vicki Post, Dir Community Activities
Mike Whisler, Gen Mgr, AAFEX

2. Mr. Bell gave the invocation followed by the Pledge of Allegiance.

3. SGM(R) Law recognized visitors and reviewed the materials in the packet.

4. COL Aycock, attired in the new combat uniform, gave a short orientation about the composition of the uniform. He pointed-out that this uniform was designed based on input from soldiers in the field. He gave an overview of the current and proposed building on Ft. Bragg due to BRAC. Ft. Bragg will gain some 6,000 soldiers and over 1,000 civilian and 12,000 family members. The first change will be the 4th Brigade for the 82d Airborne Division.

The 508th Parachute Infantry and the 320th Airborne Artillery will once again be part of the Division. Construction is ongoing to accommodate the increase with modular two story motel type buildings. These are temporary measure needed to be available by April 06. Horse Stables have been built at Smith Lake. Smith Lake will under go complete renovation and additional building which will make it a tourist attraction. It will be the new Army's North-South Recreation Center. There is a \$1.1 billion building construction program between FY 05 and FY 11. Briefings have been conducted for 250 construction professionals from surrounding areas in order to alert them of the coming construction projects. Pope AFB has not yet released their personnel gain/loss. Eventually it is planned to consolidate all air assets at Pope. Hangars etc. at Simmons Army Airfield are in need of repair; therefore it appears to be a wise economical move. Simmons will remain as a heliport until new or renovated hangars to accommodate the rotary aircraft are available at Pope. The renovation of the old Womack Hospital to the new Soldier Support Center (SSC) is moving along well, thanks to the likes of Congressman Robin Hayes, who has consistently pushing to get the funds to complete the project. All nine floors, 330,000 sq. ft. of administrative space, should open this spring. All retiree and veteran services will be located all together at the end of the clinic wing of the old hospital. Parking will be close by with reserved spaces. A Coffee Bar was set up on the first floor of the SSC a year ago and since then others have been located in various buildings on post. These coffee bars have produced some \$400K so far. MWR is and has been making more things available for both active duty, retirees and families. Last year local businesses contributed in dollars and/or kind through advertisements and sponsorship over \$1mil. This resulted in doing projects such as the 4th of July celebration on Ft. Bragg at little to no cost to Bragg. It really demonstrates what the folks in the local communities think of our soldiers and families. Troops are beginning to return to Ft. Bragg. Most of the troops will be home before the holidays. LTG Vines and the Corps Headquarters, however, are not due to return until sometime in February. The Ft. Bragg Skeet Range is a world class facility and will host the Armed Forces Skeet Championships and next year will host US Skeet Open, the National Championships for 'trap & skeet'. He mentioned that Ft. Bragg is the environmental leader in the Army. An example is Ryder Golf Course that has been Audubon Certified, the only one in the Armed Forces and is one of 18 in the state. In answer to a question reference hunting for the disabled wheel chair borne veterans. The Paralyzed Veterans of America donated a 'Hunt Master' to Ft. Bragg. A 'Hunt Master' is a handicapped accessible hunting stand with a platform that can be lowered to the ground and then take a wheel chair bound person up. It is then taken to a good established trail for hunting. The main access point on the All American Freeway should be open by February.

5. COL Post reported on the success of the O'Club and NCO Club. The system now has a Conference Director who is responsible for putting together conferences, hail & farewells etc. There are only 5 O'Clubs and 4 NCO Clubs left in the Army and one of each is at Ft. Bragg. She referred to a sheet she handed out which has the MWR web site address on one side and her card on the other. A number of upcoming activities are outlined on the sheet. On a table in the back are copies of the MWR Pocket Guide and a calendar of December events. In answer to a question reference AAFES absorbing the Navy Exchange System, the PX General manager stated that the subject comes up every now and again, however, at the present time the issue has been tabled. COL Post stated that the O'Club's cafeteria is being converted into a micro-pub complete with a deli style menu, due to open around March.

6. Mr. Whisler, the new General Manager for AAFES at Ft. Bragg/Pope AFB gave an over view of up coming activities/events. He mentioned the new PX Buddy List, it's nothing more than a letter from the two store managers which has information about up coming events. If anyone is interested in getting on the mail list just contact him WHISLERM@AAFES.COM. He talked about the movies available such as the latest Harry Potter movies which will be shown at York Theater. New projects: ground has been broken for the new Car Care Center on Knox Street; a new Charlie's will be opening at the 82d Abn Div PX; both North & South PXs will undergo some upgrading; lots of big sales will be coming up. He passed out tickets and conducted several door prize drawings. It was reported that the gas station at Yadkin Road credit card processing system at the pumps takes anywhere from 7 to 8 minutes to process one card. He said that he will look into it. Mr. Whisler was told that the past support from AAFES during RAD has always been superb and we're looking forward to continued support in the future.

7. Mr. Bell reported on RAD. He thanked all who took the time to come and participate in the golf tournament (75) on Friday morning, the RAD dinner Friday evening (240) and Saturday's activities at Womack AMC (1200). He attributed the slight decline from previous years to the major storm that had just hit and the price of gasoline (\$3/gal) as major factors. The acting Corps Commander, MG Packett, attended the dinner and opened activities at Womack AMC. Womack AMC has really taken possession of the major portion of RAD on Saturday. The idea of possibly changing the time for RAD from September to another time to try and avoid the hurricane season. Mr. Bell stated that the recent meeting the folks from Womack indicated that September was best for them. It seemed to be the consensus of the group that RAD should be left alone.. He reported that the first meeting for RAD 2006 will be conducted at Corps Headquarters on 23 November.

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8. Regional Reports:

Region I – Western – No report

Region II – Catawba & Northwest – COL(R) Doll reported that a Turkey Shoot is taking place today. He also reported that the Green Beret Parachute Team came and made a demonstration jump at the college football game. He stated that plans are on going to get a VA Clinic in Boone. An ID Card facility is being set up by a National Guard unit in Lenoir, hopefully by May. 1SG(R) Ward mentioned that some 500 veterans showed up at the local Golden Corral for the Veterans' Day meals.

Region III – Southern Piedmont – SFC(R) Clemmons reported that the O'Club folks went out of their way to accommodate him for the RAD dinner. He said his email address listed in the NCARC roster is incorrect. Correct email: rclemmon@belsouth.net

Region IV – Triad - No report

Region V – Cape Fear – SSG(R) Crawford reported a reminder that Social Security, Military Retirement Pay and VA Disability Pay would be getting a 4.2 per cent increase; however, those under Medicare would also see an increase in that withholding.

Region VI – Triangle - COL(R) Rawley reported that co-chairman SFC(R) Schone send regrets for being absence. He reported that the USO at Raleigh Durham Airport is doing great. Over 2,000 visitors this past month. It operates 24/7. In addition to hosting the lounge, the volunteers greet incoming and outbound troops. The Veterans' Day parade in Raleigh was a big success.

Region VII – Southeastern – COL(R) Mennona reported that he is still trying to get his feet on the ground and feel his way around the region. He would like to make contact with representatives in communities within the region in order to set up a network system of some sort. He said he managed to get himself appointed to the Retiree Council at Camp Lejeune. Mr. Bell mentioned that a red, white and blue floral display and card was sent for LTC(R) Byers funeral. COL(R) Mennona stated that he attended the services and met with Mrs. Byers. SGM(R) Foronda reported that, apparently under certain conditions, TRICARE would pickup 75% of payments for long term care expenses after the 100 days that Medicare pays. He reported on his visit to Ft. Campbell as an invitee for the 4th Bde 506th reunion (his Vietnam unit). He stated that as a LEG he certainly was made to feel very much welcome and at home.

Region VIII - Coastal Plains - LTC(R) Parsons reported there are some cell phone companies offering discounts to active duty and retired military personnel. One company offers 19% another 20%. You must apply for it.

9. Comments from other Council Members:

COL(R) Baker mentioned that Johnson County had a luncheon Veterans' Day at the hospital some 2,000 veterans came for lunch. Apparently the County Veterans' Affairs Officer got the message to become more pro active.

COL(R) Borresen asked if the members had any specific issues/subjects that they desired he pursue in regards to Congressional Affairs. He asked that whenever there are any issues that should be pursued contact him. He is in concert with COL(R) Baker, the AUSA Resolutions Chairman. He asked that members change his address listed in the roster to: 411 Park Avenue - Fayetteville, NC 28305 Phone, FAX, email remain the same. It was mentioned that the newsletters from AUSA and MOAA always have detailed information about pending legislations pertaining to veterans and retirees. If you want to get the MOAA newsletter it's on line, or you may contact COL(R) Rawley and he will add you to his mailing list and forward to you via email

COL(R) Britt mentioned how he tried out the Armed Forces Vacation Club (AFVC) and found it to be quite good. You can access information on the net It is a company sponsored by MWR that consolidates a listing of available vacation spaces throughout the world. It is a one contract only deal - 7 nights for a set amount of \$250. He said he wanted to give it a try so he made contact for one that was close by so if it was a bad situation he could easily go home and chalk it up to a bad experience. He went to a place in Myrtle Beach and was put up in a two bedroom, ocean front condo. Another plus is that a percentage of the fee will go to the MWR at the installation of your choice. COL Post stated that the site can be found through her web page under travel.

MSG(R) Best mentioned that visitors are always welcome at the NC Veterans Nursing Home located behind the VA Medical Center on Ramsey Street. There are a number of veterans there that have no family in the area and would really appreciate a visit from another veteran.

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10. Co-Chairman Comments: SGM(R) Law brought up the idea of possibly changing the frequency and format for NCARC Meetings. He posed the possibility of changing the number of meeting from the current three formal meeting in Jan – Mar – Jun plus the one in conjunction with RAD to one formal meeting plus the one in conjunction with RAD. The one formal meeting, possibly on a Friday in May, could be expanded to include formal presentations/briefings from Corps, Womack, DENTAC, MWR; tours/visits to commissaries/PXs, Sports USA etc. followed by lunch and a NCARC meeting in the afternoon. In addition to the meeting at Ft. Bragg the Council would still keep contact via updated notices to Council members along with the Paraglide. He indicated that he thought that maybe this would create a closer relationship with this type of exposure to the command. The members of the staff who would give some of these briefings, Would gain knowledge of the NCARC which would be an advantage for us.

Mr. Bell made some comments to the effect that veterans, particularly retirees, need to make their presence know throughout the communities and nationally. Retirees are a large force and others need to be made aware of that. As retirees we must market ourselves and retiree needs.

The next meeting is scheduled for 18 March 2006 at 1000 hours.

11. The meeting adjourned at 1155 hours.

Lawrence L. Law

Lawrence L. Law
Sergeant Major, USA Retired
Co-Chairman

Donald Latella

Donald Latella
Colonel, USA Retired
Co-Chairman

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1 ea Council Member
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